



Padre Island National Seashore
SandDollar



Friday, August 13, 2004

Superintendent

It is hard to believe that we are saying goodbye already to so many of the wonderful seasonal employee's, interns and volunteers. Their contributions to the operation of the Seashore are notable and very much appreciated.

I am happy to report that my moving van left Moose, Wyoming yesterday, followed today by two members of the family. We are looking forward to getting our home set up, and enjoying all the attributes of South Texas.

This has been a summer of firsts in several ways. As you all know, the first ever prescribed fire operation at PAI S was conducted recently. Although long planned, for one reason or another, there were always obstacles that prevented us from executing this important burn. As chance would have it, circumstances came together unexpectedly that allowed us to implement the burn plan. Thanks to everyone who adjusted priorities and made the extra effort to get the burn accomplished. Other important firsts like the record setting nesting season of Kemp's riley sea turtles along the Texas coast, and our largest ever hatchling release (attended by more than 400 visitors) are testament of years of hard work.

Thank you; your efforts are greatly appreciated. -Colin

Colin's schedule:

Monday, 8/16 – In the Park; Out of the Park
Tuesday, 8/17 – In the Park; Squad
Wed., 8/18 – In the Park
Thurs., 8/19 – In the Park
Friday, 8/20 – In the Park

Safety Notes--

Let's continue to encourage each other to be safe.
Make it a safe day.

Employees Association News -

Administration

Ruby **STILL** has two 5 drawer filing cabinets. One is legal size and locks with a key. The locks are in excellent condition, no elbow grease required. The other cabinet is letter size and does not lock. Both cabinets are a **very attractive** green gun metal color and are in **fabulous** condition. Ruby will carry them to your office at no charge and pay you \$100.00. **WHAT A DEAL!**

FEGLI Open Season Begins in September

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced that open season for the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI) will be from September 1 through September 30, 2004. The program consists of basic life insurance coverage and three options that include coverage for up to five times an employee's base salary plus coverage for family members. In most cases, a new federal employee is automatically covered by basic life insurance. The types and amounts of coverage available are not changing. During the open season, federal and postal employees will be able to enroll in the program or increase or change current coverage without having a physical or answering any questions about their health.

Changes Are Coming to the TSP Loan Program

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) has announced that effective July 1, 2004; three changes will be made to the TSP loan program. They are: (1) A \$50 fee will be deducted from the amount of each new loan; (2) Two general purpose loans at the same time will no longer be permitted (however, one can have both a general purpose and a residential loan); and (3) Upon paying off a TSP loan, the TSP participant will not be eligible to apply for another loan of the same type for 60 days.

UNIFORMS

Within the next 2 1/2 weeks, Cargo Pants and Convertible trousers will appear on the uniform website. Employees will be able to order these items, but they will not be physically in stock with VF Solutions. It may take about 2 months before employees will be able to receive these items. We are putting them on the website now so they can order them before the ordering period ends on August 21st. I would not recommend that seasonal employees order these items yet. They are not in stock. It will take at least 2 months before these items will be shipped out to employees.

Last Day to Order Uniforms is August 21!

UPCOMING TEL EVENTS:

The trailer will be used on August 10, 17, 25, 31 and Sept. 2 for TEL training.

New Courses:

4 new TEL courses:

August 30th	You Should Know: Federal Employees Group Life Insurance
August 31st	Harpers Ferry Center - What We Can Do For You
Sep 15th & 16th	You Should Hear What They Are Missing: Hearing Loss Prevention Program
Sep 16th	Preventing Hearing Loss - Is Sounds Good To Me

FYI - there are several courses in the developmental phase and possible dates:

Sept 10th	DOI Ethics (for Ethics Officers in NPS)
Sept 22nd	Position Management
Sept 30th	An Emerging Leaders Consortium Module
Oct 21st	DOI Achieving Our Mission Through Management Excellence

NPSafe Overview for NPS Leadership: Managing for Safety Excellence Is The Right Thing to Do!	08/17/2004	Tuesday	10:00-12:00
NPSafe Overview for NPS Leadership: Managing for Safety Excellence Is The Right Thing to Do!	08/17/2004	Tuesday	2:00-4:00
NPSafe Overview for NPS Leadership: Everyone Can Make a Difference!	08/25/2004	Wednesday	10:00-12:00
NPSafe Overview for NPS Leadership: Everyone Can Make a Difference!	08/25/2004	Wednesday	2:00-4:00
Retirement Planning for New Employees	08/26/2004	Thursday	2:00-4:00
You Should Know: Federal Employees Group Life Insurance	08/30/2004	Monday	1:00-3:00
Harpers Ferry Center - What We Can Do For You	08/31/2004	Tuesday	2:00-3:00
Building a Partnership Workplace	09/02/2004	Thursday	12:00-4:00
DOI Ethics - Financial Disclosures	09/08/2004	Wednesday	1:00-3:00
From Huger to Harasser: The True Story Behind Sexual Harassment	09/09/2004	Thursday	10:00-12:00
Communication: The Key to Performance Management	09/09/2004	Thursday	2:00-4:00
NPS Recreation and Preservation Programs	09/13/2004	Monday	2:00-4:00
You Should Hear What They Are Missing: Hearing Loss Prevention Program (attendance is required for both days)	9/15/2004 9/16/2004	Wednesday Thursday	1:00-4:00 1:00-2:30
Preventing Hearing Loss - It Sounds Good To Me	09/16/2004	Thursday	3:00-4:30
Managing Performance	09/21/2004	Tuesday	10:00-12:00
Position Descriptions: What Every Supervisor Should Know	09/21/2004	Tuesday	2:00-4:00
Taking the Grief Out of Administrative Grievances	09/23/2004	Thursday	2:00-4:30
IDP Interpretive Media Development (Module 311)	09/28/2004	Tuesday	12:00-4:00
Working With NPS Agreements for Partnerships (Module 1): Tools for Effective Partnering	11/03/2004	Wednesday	12:00-4:00
Working With NPS Agreements for Partnerships (Module 2): Developing and Managing Agreements for Partnerships	11/04/2004	Thursday	12:00-4:00

Facility Management

The fuel pumps are still being operated manually due to software problems. A technician from the vendor, OPW, will be here soon to resolve this problem.

Rey Brown is trying to resolve the problem of getting the sprinkler system contractor back to finish the job. A final test cannot be performed until then.

If anyone has seen a package from Sunwise Construction related to housing rehab, please contact Luis. The contractor said he sent this to the park some time ago, but it hasn't been seen.

Interpretation

Phil has completed the controlled property inventory of the museum collection. On Friday, he and Katie Morris will commence work on the random sample inventory. Two more inventories are due by the end of the year: one in October and the other in December. Phil is also working on bringing the museum database, catalog records, accession records, and other items up to date. In cooperation with the Resource Management Division, Phil is working to have several concretions x-rayed in the near future, to determine what they

contain. He is also attempting to find a coin expert who can tell us more about some of the (possibly rare) coins in the collection, which may be posted on the website at a later date. Another museum project in the works is to turn some of the art prints in the collection into posters that can be sold in the VC bookstore. Phil has also been working with Herpetologist, Mike Duran to accession the field specimens he has collected into our museum.

Phil is working with the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery Division to acquire a life-size model of a nesting Kemp's ridley to put in the VC.

Phil has created an extensive in-depth section for the website. It will include detailed sections on oil and gas drilling and on sea turtle recovery. It will also have a copy of the administrative history, other sections on history, a bird checklist, at least two photo galleries, a section on shoreline trash, and many other sections. Phil will hopefully be able to post it soon. When it is posted, some sections will still be under construction, but the most important issues will be complete.

Please remember the adopt-a-beach clean-up is on September 18. McDonald's and Coca-cola have been contacted about providing the usual donations and McDonald's has confirmed they will participate. Phil is also seeking a donor for more garbage bags to supply other clean-ups throughout the year.

Protection

The ranger division would like to thank Glenda, Ray, Gary, and Monroe for all the work they are doing on the ranger vehicles. Special attention should be made for the money Glenda is saving the park by negotiating numerous issues with vendors on matters such as warranty coverage, unnecessary repairs, and overcharges. If you think your hard work goes unrecognized we want you to know we appreciate the work the four of you do!

The park got quite a reprieve with tropical Storm Bonnie and Hurricane Charlie. If folks are not prepared either at their work site or at home I hope these two events have everyone alert and thinking

Hurricane season. We have been very quiet thus far in what is predicted to be a more active hurricane season than normal.

Recruitment is still ongoing for GS-5/7/9 ranger position(s), Operations Supervisor, and VUA position.

Patrick Gagnon is now on duty. He is quickly integrating himself into operations and everyone in the ranger division is glad to have another partner on duty.

Resources Management

Personnel:

- Darrell will be attending a meeting in Austin on August 17-18 to work with the Southern Plains Network to discuss proposals for natural resource projects that will be submitted for the Park Service proposal call for fiscal years 2006-2011. The projects proposed will be funded with Park Service funds. Projects that the park plans to submit are:
 - Effects of fishing on shark habit and its distribution within the park
 - Marine Debris
 - Burrowing owls
 - Vehicular impacts on barrier island geology
 - Spoil island sign, protecting nesting habitat, replacement
 - Stabilization of the kitchen at the Novillo Line Camp.

Arlene will be acting while Darrell is out of the office. Darrell will be back in the office on Thursday, August 19.

Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery

Donna will be on travel from Monday August 16 through Thursday August 18. Donna will be attending a meeting of the Board of Directors for the International Sea Turtle Society in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The board will be drafting mission statements, goals, and procedures for this relatively new society of about 1,000 members that grew out of the Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle

Biology and Conservation. The following individuals will be Acting Chief of the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery during Donna's absence:

Monday August 16 - Rachael Blair

Tuesday August 17 - Jennifer Shelby

Wednesday August 18 and Thursday August 19 - Cynthia Rubio

Patrols to the Mansfield Channel are being conducted once per day and will continue through the end of September. Linda Morehead is patrolling on Sundays through Wednesdays and volunteers on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

A Kemp's ridley nest confirmed from Florida:

Forty-two Kemp's ridley nests were documented on Texas beaches this year. The only other Kemp's ridley nests suspected in the U.S. were four in northwest Florida. Donna has been asked to help verify the species for these nests. On Saturday August 7, Donna and Cynthia examined 34 unhatched eggs and dead embryos from one of these nests. Based on examination of the unhatched eggs and dead embryos and photos of the nesting turtle and hatchlings, we believe that the nest was Kemp's ridley. The researcher in Florida that watched the hatchlings emerge from the nest noted that the turtles were much slower to emerge from the nest, crawl down the beach, and enter the surf than loggerheads, another indication that the nest was Kemp's ridley. Donna and Cynthia collected tissue and gonad samples from the dead individuals they examined and will forward them with other samples they have been collecting from U.S. Kemp's nests to researchers that will perform further analyses on genetics and sex ratios.

Nests 41 and 42 are released:

The 53 hatchlings from nest 41 (containing 64 eggs), and three early hatching individuals from nest 42 (containing 93 eggs) were released at about 7:00 am on Monday August 9. The turtles were in their frenzy and entered the water in less than an hour of being placed on the beach. A large crowd of 176 visitors attended for this last public release of the year. Park staff released 25 more hatchlings from nest 42 at about 7:15 pm that evening and the one last straggler from that nest at about 8:00 am the next day.

Overall, 2,608 Kemp's ridley hatchlings and 89 loggerhead hatchlings have been released at the National Seashore so far this year. We held 14 hatchling releases that were open to the public and about 2,300 visitors attended. No more public releases will be held this year. The green turtle nest remaining in the incubation facility will likely be released at night, when public participation in releases is not possible. We thank the numerous park staff and volunteers that helped with the public releases this year. Thanks for making this the best year yet for our release program.

**PREDICTED HATCHLING RELEASE DATES FOR NESTS BEING HELD AT
THE
PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE INCUBATION FACILITY**

Nest # (Species)	Date Found	Hatchlings will Likely be Released Sometime Between these Dates
43 (Green)	July 1	August 20-25